

1998, the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and Spectrum Youth & Family Services served 1,067 young people and 1,345 family members in their programs throughout Vermont. This was an 8 percent increase in cases from fiscal year 1997. These numbers have been increasing rapidly over the past few years with a 175 percent increase in the number of youth served by the Vermont Coalition between 1992 and 1998. An area of special concern is the increasing number of young people who are being "pushed" out of their homes—those numbers increased 263 percent between 1993 and 1997 in Vermont. This is in addition to the hundreds of children each year who find themselves homeless or who have run away from home.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act does more than shelter these children in need. As the National Network for Youth has stressed, the Act's programs "provide critical assistance to youth in high-risk situations all over the country." This Act also ensures that these children and their families have access to important services, such as individual, family or group counseling, alcohol and drug counseling and a myriad of other resources to help these young people and their families get back on track. As a result of this multi-pronged approach to helping runaway and homeless youth, the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth was able to establish 81 percent of the youth served in 1998 in a "positive living situation" by the end of services. The Vermont Coalition and Spectrum Youth & Family Services should be applauded for their important work and I believe the best way to do that is to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Act for five more years, so programs like these in Vermont have some greater financial security in the future.

I want to thank the many advocates who have worked with me to improve the bill and, in particular, the dedicated members of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and the National Network for Youth for their suggestions and assistance. Without these dedicated public spirited citizens these programs could not be successful.

#### EXHIBIT 1

#### VERMONT COALITION OF RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS,

Montpelier, VT, March 9, 1999.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,  
U.S. Senator, Committee on the Judiciary,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: Thank you very much for your efforts in working for the reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. We believe that reauthorization of this legislation is very important for runaway and homeless youths and their families in Vermont, and all over the nation.

Early interventions such as those authorized under this act: the transitional living programs, crisis response and family reunification services, and peer street outreach programs are, in many cases, the only helping resource available to runaway and homeless

young people and families in crisis. These services are much less costly and more effective than later, more drastic interventions runaway and homeless youths often eventually encounter, such as substance abuse treatment and incarceration.

The Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs supports the Leahy-Hatch substitute to S-249, the Bill which passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 4th, 1999. We urge passage of this Bill by the full Senate, and feel confident that our colleagues at the National Network for Youth, and runaway and homeless youth providers all over the country also support this important legislation.

We are very grateful for the way that you and your staff have worked with us to determine the needs of this vulnerable population, and the way that we can best address those needs. Karen Marangi, counsel for your office, has been diligent in her efforts to meet with us and our youthful program participants, keep us informed about your actions in Committee, and use the data which we have provided to help steer the best course. We commend you for your vision and energy in pursuing the reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. Please let us know if we can be helpful to you as you continue this good work.

Sincerely,

J.C. MYERS,  
VCRHYP Coordinator.

NATIONAL NETWORK FOR YOUTH,  
Washington, DC, March 10, 1999.

Senator ORRIN HATCH,

U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

Senator PATRICK LEAHY,

U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HATCH AND SENATOR LEAHY: On behalf of the hundreds of non-profit youth-serving organizations, youth workers and young people from around the nation who constitute the membership of the National Network for Youth, I would like to express our deep appreciation for your leadership in moving the revised Hatch/Leahy substitute version of S. 249—legislation to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, together with the Missing Children's Assistance Act—through the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, and to express our hope that your continued leadership on this legislation will enable it to move to swift approval by the full Senate.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) programs support community-based efforts that constitute a vital life-line to young people in high-risk situations all over the country. As you know, the RHYA includes three major grant programs: the Basis Center Program, which provides grants to support temporary shelter for youth (under age 18) and counseling for youth and their families, in order to assist them in a time of crisis; the Transitional Living Program, which provides grants to support longer-term (up to 18 months) shelter as well as independent living services to youth (age 16-21) who are unable to return home safely, in order to promote their successful transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency; and the Street Outreach Program, which provides grants to support street-based outreach and education to runaway, homeless and street youth who have been sexually abused or are at risk of sexual abuse, in order to connect these most vulnerable youth with services and a chance for a safe and healthy future.

The following are a few key points about runaway and homeless youth—and the programs which provide them critical supports and opportunities—which you may consider

as you move this legislation to the Senate floor:

Runaway and homeless youth are not running TO anything; they're running FROM homes where they have experienced extreme parental neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or other situations like family violence or parental alcoholism or substance abuse; some of these youth have been failed by the child welfare system, and perceive the streets as preferable to endless shuffling from one foster home or group home to another.

Runaway and homeless youth face numerous dangers on the streets: lack of education, health care and job training opportunities; increased risk of substance abuse, depression, early pregnancy, and HIV infection; and the dangers of physical and sexual assault from adults who prey on these young people.

The federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs support cost-effective community-based services for these youth, to protect them from the harms of life on the streets and either reunify them safely with family or find alternative appropriate placements.

Because runaway and homeless youth often cross state lines, there is a uniquely federal interest in addressing the needs of these youth. For a quarter of a century, the federal RHYA programs have helped to meet the needs of these young people, prevent their involvement in criminal activity, and provide them with a doorway to a safe and productive future.

Thank you for your hard work in reauthorizing these vital programs for our nation's most vulnerable youth.

Sincerely,

MIRIAM A. ROLLIN,  
Director of Public Policy.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee substitute be agreed to, the bill be considered read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 249), as amended, read the third time and passed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination on the Executive Calendar: No. 21. I ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements relating to the nomination appear at this point in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nomination considered and confirmed is as follows:

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Robert Wayne Gee, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Fossil Energy).